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ABSTRACT

Against a backdrop of increasing localization of responsibilities for human services and community development, and in a climate of diminished resources for these activities, foundations have explored the comprehensive community initiative (CCI) as a strategy to direct support toward improved well-being for children and families. This discussion paper draws on interviews, case studies of six CCIs, and transcriptions of focus groups from the study "Voices from the Field" to explore the ways that foundations can reduce the space or distance that frequently exists between them and the CCIs they support. This space can be characterized by distrust and dishonest exchange and struggles over power and accountability that can serve to diminish CCI effectiveness and dilute the learning that the experience might otherwise generate. The paper examines the roles foundations choose to play in CCI design, governance, and implementation. It identifies building trust and managing expectations and accountability as two tasks that, if performed inadequately, serve to divide CCIs from their foundation sponsors. In concluding, the paper suggests approaches that could help foundations and CCIs establish more effective operating partnerships. These approaches take into account the decision to commit to work in a community and to the CCI process, the relationship of that commitment to other foundation programming, the coordination of effort with other foundations working in that community, the creation of productive relationships within a community, the need to accelerate the development of knowledge about particularly problematic issues, and the value of a coach as keeper of the CCI vision. The paper also suggests that a similar inquiry, focused on the steps community partners in CCIs might take to enhance working relations, could be profitable. Contains 20 references. (Author)

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FOUNDATIONS AND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES: THE CHALLENGES OF PARTNERSHIP

The Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago

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DISCUSSION PAPER

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Abstract

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This space can be characterized by distrust and dishonest exchange and struggles over power and accountability that can serve to diminish CCI effectiveness and dilute the learning that the experience might otherwise generate. The authors examine the roles foundations choose to play in CCI design, governance, and implementation. They identify building trust and managing expectations and accountability as two tasks that, if performed inadequately, serve to divide CCIs from their foundation sponsors.

In concluding, the authors suggest approaches that could help foundations and CCIs establish more effective operating partnerships. These approaches take into account the decision to commit to work in a community and to the CCI process, the relationship of that commitment to other foundation programming, the coordination of effort with other foundations working in that community, the creation of productive relationships within a community, the need to accelerate the development of knowledge about particularly problematic issues, and the value of a coach as keeper of the CCI vision. They also suggest that a similar inquiry, focused on the steps community partners in CCIs might take to enhance working relations, could be profitable.

Chapin Hall Center for Children

The Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago was established in 1985 as a research and development center dedicated to bringing sound information, rigorous analyses, innovative ideas, and an independent perspective to the ongoing public debate about the needs of children and the ways in which those needs can best be met.

The Center focuses its work on all children, while devoting special attention to children facing special risks or challenges, such as poverty, abuse and neglect, and mental and physical illness. The contexts in which children are supported—primarily their families and communities—are of particular interest.

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Chapin Hall is committed to diversity not only of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and physical ability but also of experience, discipline, and viewpoint.

Chapin Hall's commitment to all children, with special attention to those experiencing or at risk of serious problems, is reflected in the range of the Center's research projects and publications. The following represent the Center's major areas of endeavor:

- Children's services, covering the problems that threaten children and the services designed to address them, including child welfare, mental health, and the juvenile court
- Primary supports, concerning the resources in communities that enhance the development and well-being of all children, but may be especially important to children who are poor or otherwise disadvantaged
- Community building, focusing on the development, documentation, and evaluation of community-building initiatives designed to make communities more supportive of children and families
- Schools and learning, examining the relationship between schools and the other settings in which children learn
- International projects, covering Chapin Hall's recent and growing involvement with children's policy researchers and research centers in other countries
- Special activities and consultations, covering a range of projects, often undertaken in collaboration or consultation with other organizations

Foundations and Comprehensive Community Initiatives: The Challenges of Partnership

Prudence Brown and Sunil Garg

Introduction

A "space" or distance frequently exists between foundations and the comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) that they support. As described by both funders and CCI representatives, this space is too often characterized by lack of understanding and trust, dishonest communications, and struggles over power and accountability. These dynamics work at cross purposes to the achievement of CCI objectives, reducing the learning that CCIs currently generate. The goal of this paper is to explore the nature of the relationship between foundations and CCIs and to consider what foundations can do to alter the nature of the space in this relationship.

The paper draws from three sources of data: (1) interviews with knowledgeable people; (2) case studies of six illustrative CCIs; and (3) transcriptions of focus groups that were carried out for the study, *Voices from the Field* (Kubisch et al. in press). Our methodology is described in Appendix A. (For reasons of confidentiality, the findings discussed in this paper cannot be related to specific initiatives and their funders.) We believe that these data, coupled with our own experiences documenting and evaluating CCIs, describe accurately a wide range of foundation relations with CCIs and the issues generated by these relationships.

The paper begins with some background on the relationship between CCIs and their foundation sponsors. The next section describes the different ways in which foundations define their roles in CCIs. We focus on several key elements of CCI design—such as the initiatives' goals and strategies or their governance and management—because it is in making choices about these elements, and working to implement those choices, that the interests of sponsors and communities are most likely to converge or collide. This section,

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First are the many people we interviewed for the study—funders and community participants involved in community change initiatives, technical assistance providers, evaluators, and other observers in the field. We are particularly grateful to Anne Kubisch, Director of the Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families, for giving us access to the transcripts from the Roundtable's Voices from the Field *focus groups.*

Next are our advisors, each of whom provided a different perspective on the paper: John Gaventa, currently a Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex, England; James Gibson, currently Director of the DC Agenda Project in Washington, DC; and Kathleen McCarthy, Director of the Center for the Study of Philanthropy at City University of New York.

A number of people gave us helpful feedback on an early draft of the paper. Among these were the members of the Roundtable at a discussion in January, 1997, chaired by Ralph Smith of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Colleagues at the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago who provided significant feedback include: Harold Richman, Steve Baker, Robert Chaskin, Janice Hirota, Ada Skyles, Rebecca Stone, and Joan Wynn. Other friends and colleagues also gave generously of their time for feedback and critique: Paul Stetzer, Joe Stillman, and Avis Vidal.

Susan Campbell of Chapin Hall provided expert editing as well as her wise thoughts about the paper. Jeff Hackett also provided editing support.

which is largely descriptive, aims to convey the range of ways that foundations engage with communities in the enterprise of CCI design and early implementation. The next section of the paper presents an analysis of two major tasks that, if performed inadequately, serve to divide CCIs and their foundation sponsors: building trust and managing expectations and accountability. The paper's conclusion describes different approaches that foundations can consider as they work to develop productive CCI partnerships.

CCIs embody a set of values and strategies that require changes both in the way decisions are made and work is carried out within the community and in the way in which the community relates to opportunities, resources, and systems outside of its boundaries.

Our intent is to stimulate discussion about enhancing the fit between the objectives of CCIs and the practices of foundations, rather than to provide definitive answers to this complex set of questions. One precaution, however, seems to offer an opportunity to reduce the severity of nearly all foundation-CCI complications. Foundations and communities must consider carefully whether or not they wish to participate in CCIs. Both sides must be willing to undergo change in ways that support CCI goals and principles. Both must be willing to engage in an up-front assessment of their own motivations and a calibration of their expectations for process and outcome.

This paper focuses on how foundations might close the distance between themselves and the CCIs they support. Bridge building frequently begins simultaneously on both sides of a divide. A similar inquiry among community participants could also prove useful.

Background

We are witnessing significant shifts in authority, responsibility, and resources related to child, family, and community policy. There is movement between the private and public sectors and, within the public sector, among the federal government, states, local communities, and municipalities. Responsibility for human services and community development has become increasingly localized. At the same time, resources at all levels have diminished. These political and economic realities challenge all parties to change the way they do business and to change their assumptions about how to do business. Such changes require new roles, new relationships, and new capacities at all levels.

In this context, foundations have demonstrated increasing interest in identifying strategies for building local capacity to take on new responsibilities for improving the lives of children and families and the communities in which they live. One indication of this trend is the leadership that foundations have taken in the design and support of comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs). These initiatives reflect the growing belief in both the human services and community development fields about the limitations of top-down, categorical approaches, especially in an era of increasing local responsibility and more flexible, if reduced, resources. In both fields, there is an emerging consensus that sustainable long-term community change requires at least two elements: (1) the participation of residents and other stakeholders in the articulation of community change goals and in the implementation of strategies to achieve these goals; and (2) a comprehensive lens that promotes an integrated, cross-sector approach to community change. To operationalize these elements, CCIs are often characterized by significant devolution of authority, responsibility, or both to community collaboratives or cross-sector planning groups; by creation of an altered resource constellation that can include mobilization of new resources or new deployment of existing resources or both; and by a substantial investment by outside sponsors in building community capacity.

CCIs embody a set of values and strategies that require changes both in the way decisions are made and work is carried out within the community and in the way in which the community relates to opportunities, resources, and systems outside of its boundaries. Community residents, professionals, organizations working in the com-

munity, and outside public and private interests are called upon to adapt their working relationships in ways that are consistent with, if not actively supportive of, core CCI objectives. One of these relationships—the one that is the focus of this paper—involves the CCIs and their foundation sponsors. If CCI goals are to be achieved, CCI experience to date suggests that both the sponsoring foundations and the initiative communities must modify, sometimes in significant ways, their assumptions, behavior, and standard operating procedures.

Funded by both national and local foundations, these initiatives come in a variety of forms: multi-site national demonstrations, initiatives being tested in multiple sites within a city or region, and single-site initiatives. Some are designed and funded by one foundation; others represent collaborations among multiple funders. What they all have in common is a long-term relationship with a funder. Regardless of the care with which it is constructed and maintained, that relationship is often awkward and sometimes fragile or contentious.

Both foundation staff and CCI representatives speak of the space between them. This space goes beyond simple negligence or arrogance on the part of either the sponsoring foundation or the initiative. It also goes beyond personality conflicts, which are to be expected within any endeavor that brings together diverse groups of people. Instead, this space is characterized by complexities in the relationship that are seldom understood fully or addressed effectively, and thus tend to undermine the possibility of a productive partnership. While there certainly are success stories and successful elements in foundation-CCI relations, we were struck by the more common reports of difficulty in achieving success—relationships that seem to work at cross purposes to the principles and objectives that define CCIs and relationships characterized at best by a lack of understanding and at worst by cynicism, dishonest communication, and struggles over power and accountability.

The CCI is still an experimental enterprise. CCIs may not yield the community changes that are desired in the long run, regardless of the status of the relationship between the sponsor and the CCI. However, there is a strong rationale for trying to get these relationships right. The stakes are high for both foundations and communities, the investments on both sides are substantial and the consequences of success or failure are profound. Foundations have the opportunity to achieve important social goals, to shape—or at least influence—one of the major policy trends in this country, and to translate the rhetoric of partnership into actual practice. Communities have the opportunity to mobilize what may be the most flexible external resources available to them,

The stakes are high for both foundations and communities, the investments on both sides are substantial and the consequences of success or failure are profound.

resources that can be responsive to local priorities and leadership, resources that are not being dictated by external categorical funding guidelines. If energy and scarce resources are diverted from important community change activities to struggles involving relationships, these opportunities may be lost, and both foundation staff and CCI participants can become demoralized. This can contribute to a growing pessimism and cynicism about the possibilities of partnership and the likelihood of significant community change. As one funder put it, "the quality of the process is related to the sustainability of the product."

In the emerging field of CCIs, many terms are vaguely or variously defined, sometimes because of confusion between aspirations and operational realities, and sometimes because short-hand meanings are used to communicate about complex phenomena. For the purposes of this paper, we are defining the relationship of interest as that between CCIs and their foundation sponsors. While both CCI representatives and their foundation partners may talk about foundation-community relations, few would make the case that the CCI is the community. Indeed, the community is not a monolithic entity and its relationship with a foundation is not dyadic. A CCI may aspire to be representative of a community, but the challenges of such an aspiration are

well documented (Chaskin and Garg 1994). Some of the complexities of the CCI-foundation relationship come from the fact that the foundation is often in the role of defining or constructing the community entity with which it intends to have a long-term relationship by selecting, for example, an existing lead agency to work with or by developing a new community-wide collaborative or organization.

Choosing a focus for examining the foundation-CCI relationship is itself complex; CCIs are composed of staff and board members, community volunteers and advisory group members, and residents and other stakeholders who participate in a variety of roles in the CCI. We have focused in this paper primarily on the initiatives' staff and board leadership because they are the ones who tend to have the most direct relationships with the sponsors. These direct relationships place CCI staff and board members at the very edge of any gap between initiative and foundation, a vantage point useful in assessing the gap's extent, origins, and permanence. We do this recognizing that these participants may not reflect all the views about and experiences with foundation sponsors that exist among the full range of CCI participants, in particular those community residents who are not on the CCI board or in some other way formally involved in the CCI.

We have chosen to focus on the relationship between CCIs and their foundation sponsors because CCIs create particular pressures and demands on the grantor-grantee relationship, demands that too frequently have not been resolved as well as they might from either party's perspective. It is important, however, to put this relationship in the larger philanthropic context: the pressures are not unique to the CCI relationship, nor are they necessarily satisfactorily resolved in other grantmaking relationships (Fine 1996). Indeed, many of these pressures are fundamental to the complex dynamics between foundations and the organizations in which they decide to invest. What we are positing is that certain tensions are exacerbated by the vision and structure of CCIs. These tensions indicate the need for new ways of thinking about how to make the relationship more supportive of successful CCI design and implementation and more productive for both sides. This is a time characterized by shifting conceptions of the appropriate locus of authority, responsibility, and resources for human services and community development. Private philanthropy is challenged to review its role in rebuilding communities and to operationalize that role in ways that effectively support the goals it aims to achieve.

The Foundation Role in Designing Comprehensive Community Initiatives

Designing a comprehensive community initiative involves many elements and a series of complex and interdependent decisions and tasks. In this section, we identify and discuss the major elements in CCI design, including the following: (1) the initiative's goals and strategies; (2) the initiative's governance and management; (3) the foundation's funding practices; (4) technical assistance; (5) evaluation; and (6) foundation staff and board roles. Within these elements are the critical junctures at which the interests of the foundation and the community intersect and the contexts in which the issues of power, accountability, and control get played out. And it is within these elements that the nature of the sponsoring foundation's partnership with the initiative community becomes defined.

For each element, we consider the critical decisions that need to be made and the manner in which different foundations have approached these decisions. The discussion is largely descriptive and is designed to convey the range of ways that foundations engage with communities in the enterprise of CCI design and early implementation. The subsequent section of the paper looks across these specific initiative elements and makes some observations about the dynamics of the relationship and the implications of these dynamics for the ongoing conduct and success of CCIs.

The Initiative's Goals and Strategies

Although CCIs share some important central features, they differ considerably in their points of entry, in their scope and priorities, and in their underlying assumptions about change. A systematic look

across existing CCIs reveals that they may use comprehensive, community-building approaches to accomplish quite different long-term goals, such as reforming the social service system and the manner in which social services are planned for and delivered within neighborhoods, promoting economic opportunity for neighborhood residents through employment and business development, improving child and family well-being, and building community capacity to mount integrated and holistic development.

Initiative goals may be defined by the foundation, the community, or a combination of the two, with foundations generally predominating in the process. Sponsoring foundations have taken a range of approaches to defining the overall goals of an initiative. Decisions about the primary goals of the initiative may be driven by a particular theory of change or approach that the foundation aims to test (Chaskin and Brown 1996; Connell and Kubisch 1996). The theory of change may have been developed by the sponsoring foundation's staff or by an intermediary, or it may be a theory that has emerged from the broader field but is considered important enough by the foundation to test more systematically in order to build knowledge for the field. In such cases, the foundation screens communities and selects those that are appropriate for the initiative, given the conditions under which it thinks its theory of change can best be tested. Thus, it approaches potential communities, either informally or formally (through a request-for-proposals process) once the initiative's overarching goals are essentially finalized. Those communities interested in being sites for the test are invited to express their interest. The assumption is that those communities who do respond have bought into the foundation's goals, either implicitly or explicitly.

While a number of foundations describe this basic approach as the one they have followed to launch the CCIs they are sponsoring, it is interesting to note that almost all of them state their goals in broad terms and are more likely to be explicit about their principles than about a particular theory of change that they aim to test (or about a set of strategies for achieving their goals and operationalizing their principles). Foundations say that this can be explained in two ways. First, they report that the more specific their theories get, the greater chance there is of excluding potential community partners who want to be part of the development of the initiative's ideas and theories. A second, quite different reason foundations give for leaving their theories implicit is that staff do not have the time or the skills to develop a well-articulated theory of change, especially in the presence of so little established knowledge about how communities change.

When initiatives are involved in goal setting, this is usually done by an organization or a less formal group in the participating community. However, we were unable to identify any case in which CCI goals and strategies were fully developed prior to engagement with foundation sponsors. More frequently, a foundation will engage potential communities in an exploratory process, and the initiative's goals emerge from the combined interests, needs, and assets of the foundation and the initiative community. The sponsoring foundation usually plays the more active role in this development process. Often, its staff—or a technical assistance provider—will work with the director of the initiative or selected community leaders to engage the community in a process of articulating its own goals and theory of change that can be discussed along with that of the foundation.

While the foundation more frequently conceives of the broad goals of an initiative, both parties aim to make the development of the specific vision and plan for achieving it a more mutual enterprise. In many initiatives, a community collaborative or planning group is charged with developing the strategic plan for the initiative, often with the help of a technical assistance provider. The funder may see its role as exposing the collaborative to best practices or otherwise shaping the plan informally. Rarely does the funder maintain formal line-item approval. But many gray areas tend to emerge during this process that can mask disharmonies and foster divergence in expectations. In one case, a funder offered a CCI a financial incentive to include in the array of proposed strategies the replication of an approach that the funder was promoting based on its success elsewhere. In

another case, a funder vetoed the use of the foundation's resources for a project that it felt stood little chance of success even though the project met the foundation's broad guidelines.

In their attempt to improve CCI planning, funders frequently spend considerable resources bringing in outside experts, supporting CCI trips to visit model programs, and exposing CCI participants to best practices. The goal is to stimulate new thinking and overcome what funders may define as the limits of local knowledge. In many such cases, however, program officers report disappointment in what they see as CCI strategic plans that incorporate little of this experience and lack innovation, creativity, and critical thinking. CCI participants, on the other hand, may feel that the plan reflects their deeply-held priorities and knowledge of the community, their need to be responsive to local community pressures and politics, or their judgment about the best way to begin work that may evolve into more innovative forms after the CCI has built a visible record of accomplishment.

The Initiative's Governance and Management

Neighborhoods are not decision-making or administrative units and "the structure of any given neighborhood does not necessarily provide a clear mechanism" to plan, implement, and monitor change (Chaskin and Garg 1994, 8). Consequently, foundations—sometimes in consultation with communities—must identify or develop a vehicle or mechanism to govern and manage the change effort at the neighborhood level. This may or may not be the same entity as the nonprofit to which the foundation officially awards the funds for the initiative. Across CCIs, a wide range of governing and managing structures have emerged. Foundations may fund lead agencies in the neighborhood and charge them with developing a broader governing body, which in turn may be charged with various amounts of advisory or decision-making powers. The long-term intent may be either to strengthen the lead agency's reach and effectiveness in the community or to incubate a new leadership body that will ultimately spin off from the agency. Another foundation approach is to fund an intermediary that helps establish a new entity, often a collaborative, in the community. This collaborative may be seen as time-limited or long-term, as responsible to the intermediary or independent of it, and as leading the initiative but not necessarily managing it, depending on whether staff report to the collaborative or to the intermediary. Still other governance arrangements exist. For example, one foundation provided support to existing community collaboratives while another initiated direct funding relationships with a number of nonprofits in the community but has not established any community-wide vehicle to oversee or coordinate these efforts.

Governance and management constitute an arena for potential conflict within the CCI as well as between the CCI and the foundation as the two try to maximize inclusiveness and participation as well as efficiency and capacity.

Whatever the particular structures and arrangements foundations establish or accept in the CCIs they support, foundations seek to maximize two, sometimes competing, goals. The first is to establish structures that are consistent with the fundamental principles of CCIs—that is, the importance of deep and representative community participation and ownership and of cross-sector interaction and commitment to holistic development. These principles have important implications for who should be involved in a central way in the life of the CCI. Foundation sponsors often want either a formal or informal body that serves as a legitimate voice of the neighborhood, that includes those in the neighborhood whose voices are often excluded or ignored as well as those who come from more readily represented sectors and social networks in the community.[1] In some

1 As Chaskin and Garg (1994) point out, there are many complicated issues involved in operationalizing the formation of a representative and legitimate voice, not the least of which is the task of establishing in whose eyes legitimacy is to be established.

cases, the sponsoring foundation may prescribe the membership of a collaborative or advisory group to ensure representation from particular segments of the community. Sometimes the foundation may itself sit on the collaborative.

The second goal or need of a sponsoring foundation establishing a CCI is to identify a nonprofit that has the fiscal and management capacity to administer the foundation's resources in a manner that is both effective and accountable. While an established organization may fulfill the foundation's need for a lead agency or fiscal agent, it necessarily brings its own governing board and management structure, and often ambivalence about empowering a broader neighborhood voice, regardless of the actual authority given to such a group.

Similar pressures arise in the community, and these, too, contribute to the array of often-unwieldy governance bodies and management arrangements that characterize CCIs. Staff may report to a collaborative, but are legally and operationally hired and supervised by lead agency staff; collaboratives make decisions that are "advisory," but are outraged or demoralized when the fiscal agent overrides them; foundations override the lead agency's decision to exclude a particular segment of the community from the planning process only to find themselves embroiled in serious local politics. It is well known that collaboratives face challenges regarding efficient decision making, lines of accountability, and personnel management. When embedded in a complex CCI management structure, these collaboratives often take many months, occasionally years, to develop effective systems for carrying out their program development and leadership functions as well as for fulfilling their communication, reporting, and staff supervision duties.

Governance and management constitute an arena for potential conflict within the CCI and between the CCI and the foundation as the two try to maximize inclusiveness and participation as well as efficiency and capacity. It is a great challenge to establish mechanisms that serve all of these needs. Such mechanisms must be imbued with similar or consistent amounts of responsibility and authority. Further, given the complex political dynamics that characterize any community, together with the tremendous influence of outside resources, the foundation's inevitable need to determine a framework for participation may present both the foundation and the CCI with a tension that can never be totally resolved.

There is an unavoidable tension arising from the amount of resources *a foundation is able or willing to devote to the CCI, the* promise *that the CCI's long-term goals entail, the* capacity *of the CCI to use the resources effectively, and the scale of the* need *that the CCI inevitably confronts in the community.*

The Foundation's Funding Practices

Foundation funding practices offer a varied set of opportunities for estrangement between sponsor and CCI. There is an unavoidable tension arising from the amount of *resources* a foundation is able or willing to devote to the CCI, the *promise* that the CCI's long-term goals entail, the *capacity* of the CCI to use the resources effectively, and the scale of the *need* that the CCI inevitably confronts in the community. This paradigm of resource versus capacity versus promise versus need is central to understanding the nature of the relationship between the foundation and the CCI and the manner in which foundations sponsoring CCIs approach three significant dimensions of their funding decisions: the length, the amount, and the flexibility of the funding.

Length. While many foundations do not have much experience with prolonged funding commitments, most recognize that CCIs are long-term efforts requiring decades to accomplish their goals. Of the foundations in our six case studies, all but one committed funding for at least five years. Most did not make a formal commitment beyond five years, but several did suggest that additional support (in the range of three to five years) would be forthcoming if the initiative was progressing in a satisfactory manner. Only one

foundation described its support as open-ended. These long-term funding commitments represent significant departures from regular philanthropic policy and practice for most CCI sponsors, especially local and community foundations. CCI participants underscore the importance of the length of this commitment. Without a firm, clear promise of long-term support (e.g., beyond five years), CCI staff argue that it is often difficult to attract and maintain high levels of investment from potential community participants. They report that community members have seen many efforts to transform their communities sponsored by foundations and other outside institutions, and they have grown skeptical of such efforts and particularly doubtful of their long-term viability. They conclude that, if community members are being asked to commit to a process that will take decades, the sponsoring foundation should make the same commitment.

Whatever the duration of their initial commitments, foundations may be faced with the task of determining an exit strategy if the initiative does not progress as planned. This raises complicated issues about accountability and partnership that are often not thought through at the beginning of an initiative. CCIs represent significant civic investments from which foundations can find it extremely difficult to extricate themselves. Some foundations take the stance that they have entered into a partnership with the community in which both parties need to work together to get things right. While gross breaches of contract or significant mismanagement could warrant foundation withdrawal of support, funders are often prepared to work very hard to avoid such terminations. In a few instances, especially in multi-site initiatives, CCI sites have been dropped—most often between the planning and implementation phases. More common, however, are cases in which the foundation maintains the funding commitment but moves it to a different lead agency in the community or conditions it on certain kinds of technical assistance or on the accomplishment of certain benchmarks of progress. One funder noted that local politics—and pressures on the foundation's board—made it almost impossible to drop a troubled site from a multi-site CCI despite the fact that its low performance was contributing to demoralization and a sense of inequity at the other sites.

Amount. CCI sponsors face several significant questions concerning the allocation of money: How much is needed overall? For what purposes? Released at what intervals and on what basis? Most foundations provide two kinds of support to CCIs: funds for the CCI infrastructure (i.e., staff, organizational expenses, etc.) and program funds. These latter funds are usually seen as flexible capital that can support some early program activities to generate visibility in the community, bring other players to the table and leverage other funds, and catalyze new forms of development in the community. While CCI staff argue that too few funds of this type make it hard for them to attract the serious attention of community residents and other stakeholders, they also point to the problem of receiving too much money too soon. Foundation representatives agree that large sums of money, or even the promise of large sums of money, can pervert the motivation of community participants, skew the strategic planning process, and overwhelm the lead agency or community collaborative, which may not be ready to absorb and administer large sums.

A foundation must consider how often to require the CCI to come back to the foundation for review and refunding, whether and how to condition the level of the funding commitment on CCI performance, and how to promote a situation in which the CCI is accountable to both the foundation and to the community without undermining the entrepreneurial spirit that is envisioned as an important quality for a CCI. In multi-site initiatives, the foundation must also consider whether to allocate equal amounts of funding across sites or to tailor the amount to the needs of each site.

There are a number of other decisions a foundation must make regarding the amount of money it commits to a CCI and the impact of these decisions on its relationship with the CCI. One issue is the nature of the fundraising role to be assumed by the funder. The foundation must decide whether to seek formal funding partners and whether such partners should pool their resources or set up sepa-

rate funding relationships with the CCI. The funder must also decide how much energy and political capital to devote to identifying and persuading other funders, both public and private, to invest in the community directly, if not in the CCI itself. These decisions all have a bearing on the funder's relationship with the CCI.

Flexibility. Most funders specify—with some negotiation—the CCI staff positions and costs for which they are willing to provide support. In addition, they tend either to include program funds in the CCIs' annual grants or to earmark pots of money at the foundation from which to approve specific project grants. Foundations differ considerably in arrangements for release of project funds and thus in the degree to which they maintain influence or control over the shape of the initiatives.

In some initiatives, the foundations have supported the establishment of intermediaries in the community that serve primarily as mini-grantmaking organizations. A foundation may "block-grant" the funds to a CCI whose charge, in turn, is to select and fund specific community projects. Alternatively, a foundation may retain the funds and respond to project recommendations from the CCI. This arrangement can be administered in quite different ways.

One way is for the foundation's board to essentially rubber stamp such recommendations. For example, in one initiative, the program officer was given the authority to negotiate with the CCI program grants under $25,000, requiring only the approval of the foundation's board chairman, while grants over $25,000 required formal board approval. In no instance during the five years of the initiative was a CCI-recommended grant turned down by either the chairman or the board. Such an approach serves to strengthen and further legitimize the authority of the CCI. However, both foundation and CCI representatives note that there are potential dangers in having CCIs disburse significant amounts of money in the community. The danger is greater if the responsibility is given prematurely, before appropriate financial and monitoring systems are in place. In all cases, there is a risk that some of the same trust and accountability problems that can exist in the CCI-foundation relationship will get replicated between the CCI and potential community recipients of CCI funds.

In other initiatives, foundations have preferred to maintain a more traditional role in relation to the program grants made through the CCI. In these cases, the foundation is a more active participant and the program grants are the product of the input and interests of the program officer and possibly the foundation's board or program committee, as well as the participants within the CCI. Although it is not always the case, such project development processes can be fraught with tension arising from differences in perspective that can exacerbate issues of power and control. Critical decisions to be considered by a foundation preferring a more active role in the development of specific projects include at what points to intervene in the project's development and with whom (e.g., the CCI staff director, the CCI board, the potential grantee organization) and through what channels to communicate input. The foundation also has to decide how much flexibility to give the program officer to negotiate and finalize project decisions with the CCI.

Technical Assistance

Designing and implementing a CCI is a demanding enterprise, organizationally, conceptually, and politically. The tasks that need to be accomplished are challenging individually and, in combination, require many different skills and capacities in the individual participants, the staff leadership, and the organizational structures in which the CCIs are embedded. While they accomplish their work in very different ways, most CCIs need to address the following tasks fairly early in their existence:

> *Establishing an effective governance and management structure* to drive the initiative requires identifying appropriate staff, creating a mechanism (often a collaborative) to solicit broad-based input and guidance, and developing effective communication and decision-making systems among staff, collaborative members, and the "host" organization and community in which a CCI is located.
>
> *Developing a strategic plan* requires gathering and synthesizing relevant data within

an analytic framework, coming to consensus about long-term goals, identifying strategies that are likely to have catalytic and mutually reinforcing effects, and soliciting input from and building support among various constituencies that will be involved in implementing the plan.

Operationalizing community building requires a range of capacity-building strategies to strengthen community institutions that, in turn, help residents to mobilize for their own and their community's advancement; to build new and stronger social networks, partnerships, and associations; to promote vehicles for resident participation and leadership; and to forge common ground among diverse interests.

Establishing effective relationships with resources and opportunities outside of the community requires an entrepreneurial approach to fundraising and collaborative project development that incorporates new funding streams and new partnerships into the CCI's overall strategy but avoids their threatening the initiative's core identity and purpose.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of CCI tasks. For example, some CCIs have clear policy-change or system-reform objectives that generate additional tasks; others have strong specializations in areas like economic development, homelessness prevention, or youth development; still others have significant secondary agendas in areas like race relations. The point here is to underscore the wide range of things that CCIs do, the complexity of these tasks, and the challenge of providing support that anticipates and responds to the initiative's needs at different points in its development.

Foundations have come to see technical assistance as a key element in their CCI strategies, recognizing that neither a foundation nor a CCI is likely to have all the skills required for success. They have also come to see the challenges in designing a technical assistance strategy that appropriately addresses issues in deciding the timing, amount, and content of support; the providers of support; and the structural arrangements undergirding the support (e.g., to whom the providers are accountable, in whose budget technical assistance resources sit, and how different providers are coordinated). Dealing with these complicated issues can lead to tensions between the funder and the CCI. The question of who selects and pays for technical assistance providers can be a particularly contentious one. In one multi-site initiative, the foundation secured a team of technical assistance providers prior to the selection of the initiative communities based upon its experience of the types of assistance needed by CCIs. The sites later asserted that the team of providers did not possess the specific skills needed by the sites, and that the providers, feeling pressure to demonstrate their usefulness to the funder, served to complicate and obstruct the sites' work. The funder eventually agreed to dismiss the team of providers and to engage a technical assistance provider familiar to one of the sites to design a new technical assistance strategy for the CCI. Some CCI participants make the case that lessons are best transferred through cross-site learning, peer mentoring, and exchange, rather than through reliance on experts in the field.

Evaluation

Evaluating CCIs presents a number of increasingly recognized challenges that are both methodological and substantive. As described by the Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families, the attributes of CCIs that make them particularly difficult to evaluate include "horizontal complexity, vertical complexity, the importance of context, the flexible and evolving nature of the interventions, the breadth of the range of outcomes being pursued, and the absence of appropriate control groups for comparison purposes" (Connell et al. 1995, 3). While some believe that CCIs cannot be evaluated in traditional terms, most agree that such major investments need to be evaluated in some way to generate learning for the sponsoring foundations, for the participating communities, and for the larger field.

One of the challenges in CCI evaluation is that these audiences can have quite different priorities for what it is they want to learn (Brown 1996). CCI operators are particularly interested in information about the ongoing implementation of the initiative so that its progress and strategies can be assessed and mid-course correc-

tions instituted. Foundation staff are likely to focus as well on whether the ideas and approach in which they have invested show promise and whether the initiative's experience can generate lessons for the broader field. Evaluators often struggle with balancing the priorities of these two different audiences in the questions they elect to address; the ways in which they go about collecting data, analyzing that data, and framing results; and the forms in which they provide feedback and the timing of that feedback. Moreover, evaluation can become the arena for larger struggles between the CCI and the foundation—concerning definitions of success and accountability, control of resources, and ownership of knowledge and data. Even the documentation function presents challenges for CCI-foundation negotiation: in whose voice should the story of the initiative be told?

Neither foundations nor CCI participants can cite many examples of evaluations that seem to work from all parties' perspectives. Evaluation reports are often seen by CCI participants as abstract or inaccessible, not timely, or irrelevant, and by funders as unhelpful in assessing the value of their investment. Finally, in some initiatives, evaluators take on selected aspects of the technical assistance role. In these cases, there are the additional issues about who pays and to whom the evaluator is accountable that mirror those cited above for technical assistance providers.

One recent development in the CCI evaluation field has particular implications for the foundation-CCI relationship—that is, the increasing interest in theories-of-change approaches to evaluation (Connell and Kubisch 1996). These approaches focus on articulating the logical links among the strategies sites propose to implement in order to achieve initiative goals, the long-term and interim outcomes anticipated as a result of each strategy, and the benchmarks to be used to assess progress. Whether or not this approach provides a useful basis on which to evaluate an initiative, proponents say that simply going through the exercise of specifying the assumptions and hypotheses that guide CCI planning and implementation can be very helpful in building a framework that is shared by both the foundation and the CCI (Milligan et al. 1996). A shared framework can help to make the evaluation a shared enterprise in which both sides have input and some control; it can be the basis for discussing differences in perspective, as well as similarities; and it can contribute to building trust and ongoing communication between CCI participants and foundation sponsors, thereby helping to unite disparate visions of what constitutes CCI progress or success. The utility of a shared framework seems fairly clear; a theories-of-change approach may be only one of a number of ways to achieve such a framework. One of our case studies reported using a theories-of-change framework, but it was too early in the foundation's adoption of the approach to make any judgments about its impact on the foundation-CCI relationship.

Evaluation reports are often seen by CCI participants as abstract or inaccessible, not timely, or irrelevant, and by funders as unhelpful in assessing the value of their investment.

Foundation Staff and Board Roles

Foundation practices and operating style are powerful factors in CCI development, in particular the roles that their staff and boards are expected to play in CCI design and implementation. Although all sponsoring foundations assign staff to an initiative, they differ in the nature of the involvement expected of the staff.

At one end of the spectrum, though not very common, are foundation staff who maintain a relatively remote position in relation to the day-to-day operations of the initiative. In such instances, communications and interactions between the foundation staff and the CCI may be structured and predictable and may be conducted through an intermediary, with engagements between the CCI and the funder at set times, such as the submission of quarterly, biannual, or annual reports.

At the other end of the spectrum are those foundation staff who have designed or had significant input into the shape of the initiative and maintain a much closer relationship with it. These staff may devote

full working time to overseeing the initiative, attending community meetings, sitting on the neighborhood governing body, and working to support and guide the initiative and to link it to resources and best practices in other communities. A staff person in this situation can be challenged to shape a role that combines elements of many roles: monitor, grantmaker, resource, advocate, standard-setter, coach, convener, and mediator. One program officer said that her involvement was driven by a desire to be "a pollinator of ideas" and to share information to which the community did not have ready access. Another envisioned his primary role as fundraiser. Still another felt that it was her responsibility to keep city and state officials informed about the initiative in order to lay the groundwork for policy changes that would support the initiative and efforts like it in the future.

Because the relationship between a program officer and a CCI is inherently dynamic, he or she is frequently called upon to play different roles at different times (Roundtable 1997). Sometimes it is appropriate to stand back and watch the CCI evolve; other times the program officer may be calling meetings, introducing people to each other, trying to raise funds, and so forth. This requires the program officer to be able to draw upon a range of operating styles and skills and to have a nuanced appreciation for when to do what.

For foundations, fashioning a staff role involves determining the degree of authority to invest in that staff person. Some foundations give the staff a great deal of autonomy in their relations with the CCI, including the authority to make funding and administrative decisions or recommendations that are "rubber-stamped." In one case, the foundation established a discretionary pool of resources specifically earmarked for the CCI from which the program officer was able to recommend (with the assumption of approval) technical assistance and small grants. Such an approach may not be consistent with the authority program officers have in other grantmaking programs, but is seen as necessary if the staff are to be effective and taken seriously in the community. Another element of fashioning a staff role is to specify the responsibilities of relatively autonomous program officers for keeping the foundation leadership apprised of developments and possible problems.

One foundation officer commented that staff have to be willing to be "bloodied" by the process, at both the community and foundation levels.

There was consensus among the foundation officers and community representatives with whom we spoke that CCIs require foundation staff who are seasoned in and able to move between the worlds of foundations and communities and who are able to understand the nuances of the organizational dynamics, politics, and cultures of both worlds. Foundation staff assigned to CCIs often have to be prepared to take active roles in translating and decoding communications between the partners. One foundation officer commented that staff have to be willing to be "bloodied" by the process, at both the community and foundation levels. She noted that both foundations and communities are likely to resist, at least from time to time, the changes that CCIs require and that blaming the messenger—that is, the staff person—can constitute one form of that resistance.

A second component of the foundation's operating style is the involvement of its board of directors. In some instances, the board's operations remain unchanged and the initiative is viewed in the same way as other projects funded by the foundation. In these cases, the board will typically be updated annually or biannually by the foundation staff on the status of the initiative, at which times they may make decisions about continued funding based on the recommendation of the staff. Boards of other foundations—particularly community or local family foundations—tend to take a more hands-on approach. This may involve developing relationships with individuals from the initiative communities, as well as conducting a series of site visits to better understand the operations and context of the initiative. In several of the cases we examined, a special committee of the board was established to oversee the initiative. In one case, by including community repre-

sentatives, the committee served to provide new voices to the foundation's governance. In another, a community collaborative member reported that she concluded that the initiative had really matured when she felt comfortable calling a member of the foundation's board about a problem faced by the initiative.

Finally, some foundation staff and a number of CCI participants noted a distinction between funders' focus on the long-term policy change goals of the CCI and their unwillingness or inability to exert their influence in the arenas in which such policies are determined. In one case, CCI participants mentioned that they would like to see their funders become involved in county and state policy decisions regarding the implementation of new welfare reform legislation since such legislation was likely to have a significant impact on the CCI's goals and outcomes. In another case, CCI staff expressed disappointment that the funder did not try, even informally, to influence the city's decision to redirect resources from the neighborhoods to downtown development. Only one foundation in our case studies considered the possibility of exerting its influence at a policy level, in this case regarding redlining that was occurring in one of the initiative's neighborhoods. While there was a general consensus among all the funders with whom we talked that foundations are not well positioned to deal with complicated local politics, there seemed to be widespread ambivalence about playing a more active role in local policy development.

The Foundation-CCI Relationship: The Challenges of Partnership

Building partnerships across the space created by asymmetries or inequalities of power presents many challenges. Indeed, some CCI participants and observers question whether partnership is really the most appropriate way to think about the relationship between a foundation sponsor and a CCI community given the significant power and resource differences between the two. They note that one "partner" gets to "look intimately and intensely at the politics and values" of the other and "make all kinds of judgments" about the other who, in turn, "may not under any circumstances" return this look in kind (Roundtable 1997). Another source of discomfort with the notion of partnership comes from those who think foundations use the term because "we want to feel as though we're all in it together. . .when, in fact, the consequences of failure are very different" (Roundtable 1997). While a failed CCI can be devastating to a community, the consequences for a foundation are much more indirect and often experienced as missed opportunities rather than direct assaults on the foundation's reputation.[2]

Many foundations, however, consider a partnership, perhaps characterized more appropriately as a *limited partnership*, as viable if it respects and values equally the roles and contributions of each partner and is based on mutual goals and overlapping self-interest. In this view, the foundation-CCI partnership is one that draws on complementary needs, assets, and goals, such as the match between local knowledge and broader knowledge in the field, between local talent and access to people outside of the neighborhood who can help to get things done, or between on-the-ground implementation and policy change. We use the term partnership advisedly in this paper, recognizing its limitations and nuances. More important than the term itself, from our perspective, is the effort to identify and understand the dynamics and tasks that challenge the foundation-CCI relationship, which is the goal of this section of the paper.

The design and operations of CCIs allow for many points of interaction between the sponsoring foundation and the initiative. As described in the previous section, some foundations take a more active position, working closely with representatives from initiative communities to define and structure the various critical elements that constitute a CCI. Other foundations choose a more limited set of elements over

2 Those who feel that foundations should face more public scrutiny note that they don't have "any of the large, demanding constituencies that other kinds of institutions must keep informed and happy: they have no voters, no customers, no investors" (Lehmann 1997, 20).

which to exercise influence or control. But it is a partnership, as we have noted, that both foundation staff and CCI representatives speak of as difficult and sometimes dysfunctional. In particular, two interdependent ingredients necessary for an effective partnership too often remain problematic in the foundation-CCI relationship: mutual trust, and clear expectations and lines of accountability. In this section, we explore five major challenges that can undermine the process of building trust and managing expectations and accountability in the relationship between foundations and CCIs. These challenges are: establishing honest communications, understanding the other's context, establishing benchmarks and timetables, building capacity, and addressing issues of race and ethnicity. Recognizing that these challenges are interrelated, we have separated them in this section to try to understand how each contributes to the nature of the space between foundations and CCI representatives as they work together to shape and implement CCIs.

Many representatives from initiative communities report that their interactions and experiences with foundations have conditioned them to be distrustful of and, in extreme cases, subversive toward the funder.

Establishing Honest Communications

Forging a relationship that is characterized by straight talk is a universal challenge for CCIs and foundations. As one program officer explained, "All participants come with assumptions, perceptions, and emotional responses, which are often based on prior dealings with the foundation in a more traditional role." Many representatives from initiative communities report that their interactions and experiences with foundations have conditioned them to be distrustful of and, in extreme cases, subversive toward the funder. Many grantees have become habituated to saying what they think the funder wants to hear in order to avoid conflict and bolster their chance for grant approval.[3] Funders, in turn, come to expect and tolerate disingenuous behavior from grantees, rather than inviting and being responsive to honest pictures of their intentions or experiences. Fostering honest communication may require that a foundation receive bad news, modify a funding strategy or plan that has been approved by the foundation's board, or challenge the grantee in a way that leads to discomfort for both the foundation staff and the CCI participant. CCI participants take risks in telling funders the truth about the problems they face and the struggles they are having. While the prevailing norm suggests that the community is supposed to come up with certain ideas and directions, many CCI participants report feeling that there is a "right" answer that is up to them to discover, a situation that leads to what one participant referred as "very complicated sorts of dances."

Both sides can become accustomed to operating in a distrustful but tolerant fashion so long as their needs and interests are being met. We were struck by the amount of energy a number of CCI participants report expending to maintain a less-than-honest system—trying to dissect the other's true motives, to stake out a favorable position in relation to the other, or to anticipate problematic responses in impending interactions. There often seemed to be a profound sense of not being on the same team and of the dangers of speaking the truth to each other.

These dynamics and cynicism constitute a worst-case scenario, not the norm. But aspects of this scenario are fairly pervasive. For example, a foundation officer reports that after he has had to "promise the world" to his trustees in order to get their approval to fund the CCI, he now finds himself reporting on the status of the initiative in the best possible light, even though

3 There is some evidence from the literature on collaboration that unequal groups who have no experience of working together are more likely to be successful if they are willing and able to struggle around these differences, a struggle that many times involves conflict in the early stages of the working relationship (Brown 1994; Gaventa 1997).

he has some serious concerns.[4] Keeping up what he called a charade (or at least an exaggerated sense of success), he feels isolated from his colleagues and unsure of what to do next. He sees it as both a blessing and a curse that the CCI participants are more than happy to collude with this charade in order to get refunding. He also notes his disappointment that few of his peers in other foundations seem to be candid about the problems and challenges they are facing in similar enterprises.

Understanding the Other's Context

Both foundation and CCI representatives report that the other does not understand their current context or the history that influenced their current context and actions. This lack of understanding contributes significantly to both the lack of trust between the partners and to problems managing expectations and accountability.[5] One foundation staff person spoke of CCI representatives as having a Wizard of Oz stereotype of funders—mystically powerful but withholding. While the foundation staff person saw himself as sympathetic to the problems experienced by the CCI and able to appreciate that outcomes would not materialize for a while, he did not feel that community participants understood the limitations and pressures in the foundation that constrained him. For example, he was getting ready to go back to the foundation's board for refunding, but he had little to show that would ensure his "bottom line" trustees that the CCI was on track. As he put it, only half-jokingly, "How do you go back for more money when it looks like nothing has been produced in the community besides a lot of meetings?" While he was prepared to explain how the progress to date was consistent with other experience in the CCI field and how it constituted a good foundation for future work, he did not feel that anyone in the CCI appreciated the circumstances in which he was operating.

Another foundation officer pointed to her foundation's lack of understanding of community context and interests. She recalled an incident where the foundation developed a theory of change and designed an initiative with a particular community in mind but did not include community representatives in the process. Upon engaging the community, the foundation discovered that a CCI was not a high priority for a large number of residents who instead saw the community "as a place of last resort" and wanted help finding ways to relocate. From the program officer's perspective, the community's limited interest in the foundation's initiative did not mean that they did not "get" it; rather, it reflected an informed resistance or objection to the initiative's vision and goals.

More common, however, is the case in which the community, as represented by a lead organization or group of stakeholders, responds quickly and positively to a foundation invitation. CCI participants report that foundations do not appreciate that distressed communities and the nonprofits that work in them are often so much in need of resources that they can respond to an invitation to participate in an initiative without being either clear or enthusiastic about the foundation's goals and assumptions. The driving force for participation in the initiative in these cases is the funds made available by the foundation rather than the initiative's ideas and goals. These communities can come to feel that the initiative's ideas have been imposed upon them despite the fact that they chose to participate, and foundation representatives can become impatient that the CCI participants do not seem committed to operationalizing the ideas the foundation felt everyone had agreed upon when the invitation was accepted.

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4 In a related vein, one funder reported on his experience as a member of a CCI funding collaborative. When the funders compared—retrospectively—the grant recommendations that they had prepared for their individual boards, it became clear that they were all selling somewhat different projects with different timetables and measures of success (Roundtable 1997).

5 John Gaventa (1997) reports that the World Bank is now developing a process of "field immersion" for staff who must go into a village to live for a short amount of time. One wonders how such an experience might work for foundation staff and CCI participants and whether it would help both sides understand the other's context in ways that would benefit the working relationship.

An important variation on not understanding the other's context is not understanding the effect of one's presence in the other's context. A point made frequently by CCI participants is that foundation staff tend to underestimate their power and influence, especially in the CCI community. While funders may see themselves as one of many voices in a decision-making process or one of many participants in a collaborative meeting, their presence and opinions carry more weight because they are the source of funds. Program officers may be reluctant to acknowledge this as a structural issue, thinking that the strength of their own personalities combined with good intentions can eliminate or reduce the imbalance created by the status of funder. But this type of denial does not help build trust. A technical assistance provider reported that he arranged to hold a workshop for a group of CCI participants. The funder attended only part of the workshop, and the TA provider reported that there were significant differences in the interaction and participation, and in the development of a peer support system, when the funder was and was not in the room. Yet, when he tried to discuss this with the program officer, she could not understand why this was the case since she had been merely an observer, not an active participant.

Establishing Benchmarks and Timetables

CCIs require significant investments of resources over time. Foundations must be willing to commit to long-term support even for the CCI to get off the ground, offering sufficient promise of success to engage the community and other stakeholders. CCIs may be some of the biggest and longest-term investments that a foundation makes. The stakes are high, both in the foundation and in the community. But it is difficult to build in accountability measures that can be used to assess meaningfully whether the initiative is on track. CCIs tend to be adaptive, evolutionary, and opportunistic in operations. To ensure that they are driven as much as possible by an organic process of development, agreements between foundations and CCIs are made generally around principles, goals, and processes. These agreements rarely establish specific benchmarks and timetables. Developing benchmarks that provide accountability, but do not penalize learning from error, risk, or opportunity is a significant challenge.

Two additional factors contribute to the lack of discussion regarding benchmarks. First, there is no established body of knowledge and implementation experience to support the development of such markers. Second, CCI participants often perceive a gap between the foundation's stated goals for an initiative, the scale of resources it makes available for the initiative, and the depth of community needs. When the foundation is not receptive to discussing this gap, both the foundation and the CCI may resist engaging in the benchmark discussion head-on.

With so little established wisdom about what constitutes reasonable expectations for community change, initiative participants can feel that the establishment of benchmarks and timetables occurs in a vacuum or at the uninformed discretion of the foundation. One community participant explained how he and other community participants argued against their sponsoring foundation's insistence about limiting the planning period to nine months. He felt the foundation did not understand that the CCI needed time for community distrust to be overcome and for residents to engage in a constructive collaborative process. Eventually, he said, the foundation extended the planning period, but only after other sites in the initiative had failed to deliver a product judged adequate by the foundation. However, in his opinion, the damage to the process and to the cultivation of productive relationships within the community had already been done.

Complicating the establishment of benchmarks and timetables for an initiative are potential differences between the funder and the CCI representatives in how they experience and interpret the same "reality." Both sides spoke of the recurring problem of the other interpreting an event or situation differently, with the two sides sometimes reporting contradictory evidence or analysis. In one initiative, CCI representatives, having satisfied the foundation's initial expectations, felt they were

organizationally and administratively prepared to incorporate as a 501(c)(3) organization and to expand the scope of their activities. The foundation, however, advised caution, viewing such expansion as requiring additional capacity building, over at least a five- to seven-year period. While the foundation felt it was acting in good faith and protecting both its and the initiative's interests, the CCI representatives interpreted the foundation's stand as demonstrating a reluctance to "let go" of the CCI and of the influence the foundation had exercised over its operations.

In another initiative, following a nine-month program development period and upon reviewing the program grant recommendations in final form, the funder rejected all of them. The CCI had met the timetable for the submission of program grants, but the funder and the CCI representatives disagreed about the process and the extent to which the funder had been included in the development of program grants. In this CCI, the funder had clearly stated to CCI representatives its retention of final approval over program grants and, in an effort to reduce confusion and misunderstanding, its desire to be intimately involved in the development of such grants. Still, the CCI participants felt betrayed, claiming they had kept the funder informed about the focus and objectives of the grants during the nine-month period and that the funder had not raised any objections. The funder claimed that CCI representatives had deliberately marginalized the funder's involvement and that not until receiving the grants in final form had the foundation been able to review the grants fully. Thus, the same "reality" was experienced very differently by the CCI and the funder.

Both sides express frustration about the other's perceived resistance to appropriate accountability. Program officers express frustration over their feeling that CCI representatives often seek substantial, and even disproportionate, input into critical decisions, but balk at assuming accountability for such decisions. In one initiative, the funder proposed to eventually devolve responsibility for the allocation of program grants to the CCI. The CCI participants resisted, saying that they wanted the funder to follow their advice as to the allocation of grants, but that they did not want to be accountable for the final decisions because such accountability would complicate their relationship with organizations in their community. The funder expressed frustration that the CCI seemed to want power without responsibility. CCI representatives cite instances in which they see the funder failing to accept accountability for decisions or commitments made. In one initiative, the funder early on made a commitment to the CCI to assist in seeking additional funding, particularly for the long term. According to CCI representatives, however, the funder had dedicated minimal resources to fulfilling this commitment during the first four years of the initiative. This left CCI representatives discouraged. Not only did they lack a mechanism through which to hold the foundation accountable, but also they remained almost totally financially dependent on the funder.

Building Capacity

There is a strong emphasis in CCIs on building capacity, but doing so may take longer than funders expect. While the pace may accelerate when internal capacity is further developed, the funder is constantly challenged to weigh the value of capacity building against the value of moving the initiative forward in a timely and effective manner. This situation creates a conflict for foundation staff who do not want the community and the initiative to drift, but worry about being too directive and possibly inhibiting the initiative from developing its own internal mechanisms to combat drift. Funders report that their decision making in such cases must include an assessment of the risk to the successful achievement of initiative goals in the long run from allowing the CCI more time or more autonomy regarding the pace of the initiative.

In one case, the program officer learned that a site was about to hire an individual whom she felt was not up to the task. Having had no experience in hiring staff collectively, the collaborative had not yet developed a process for hiring that had sufficient input from its diverse group of members. The funder perceived that she had a variety of less-than-satisfying options: to stay out of staff hiring altogether, to make

sure that the hiring process has integrity, or to back or veto a particular candidate. If she did intervene, she would have to decide whether to do so formally or informally.

For CCI representatives, issues relating to how and when to raise capacity needs can also be sensitive. Representatives may feel as though a request for assistance will be interpreted by the foundation as a reflection of the CCI's weakness and will provide the foundation staff with a rationale for monitoring the CCI more closely. A common complaint among CCI participants is that foundations often do not make the connection between the success of the CCI and the strength of the host or lead agency.[6] Without this connection, few foundations appear motivated to make significant capacity-building investments in the financial or management systems of the lead agencies or in their staff capacity over and above the CCI-dedicated staff. Another complaint is that in establishing their expectations foundations do not take into account the existing state of the neighborhood's social infrastructure. This is in spite of the fact that we know that a strong presence of grassroots leadership and of social networks makes achieving resident participation and building collaborative ventures an easier and quicker enterprise than in those neighborhoods with little social infrastructure (Community Partnership Center 1997). Again, few foundations appear interested in building social infrastructure prior to launching a CCI.

The inability to discuss race and ethnicity honestly and openly can be very destructive, with issues unrelated to race or ethnicity frequently being translated into and interpreted as diversity issues by both sides.

Addressing Issues of Race and Ethnicity

An examination of the typical profiles of initiative communities and sponsoring foundations reveals stark differences between the two in demographic characteristics. Initiative communities tend to be low-income, mixed or minority communities, typically African American or Hispanic. Foundations are typically located downtown and are governed and staffed primarily by white individuals.[7] These differences can exacerbate the preexisting power dynamics between foundations and communities and can produce a situation where, even if community participants or funders look at themselves as individuals, others may be unable or unwilling to see beyond their racial/ethnic status. Diversity issues become another factor in the space between a foundation and a CCI community.

Although both foundations and initiative communities recognize race and ethnic relations to be fundamentally important to CCIs, both sides may be uncertain about how to begin to address them. In some situations, particularly those in which a CCI is being implemented in a racially and ethnically diverse neighborhood, issues of race and ethnicity may demand immediate attention. In these cases, CCI representatives will have to broach issues of race and ethnicity in order to determine the racial/ethnic composition on the CCI governing body, for example. This experience can remove some of the collective discomfort within the initiative about discussing race and ethnicity. But, as one program officer said, "You can't talk about race casually." And there is a keen awareness that negative experiences between foundations and minority communities can make positive experiences in the future much harder, both for the particular foundation involved and for other philanthropies.

The inability to discuss race and ethnicity honestly and openly can be very destructive, with issues unrelated to race or ethnicity frequently being translated into and interpreted as diversity issues by both sides. For example, in one extreme case, where the foundation-CCI relationship had deteriorated significantly, suggestions by the white program officer about the devel-

6 This is consistent with a general tendency among foundations to focus on program efficiency rather than the long-term strengths of their grantees (Letts et al. 1997).

7 Many foundations are significantly more diverse than they were ten to fifteen years ago, but they are still largely "majority" institutions, especially in the eyes of distressed CCI communities.

opment of programs in an African American community were interpreted by some CCI representatives as being indicative of the program officer's belief that black people could not develop their own programs; a few representatives even whispered behind her back, "Yes, master," in response to suggestions. Later, the foundation formally expressed its disappointment with the progress of the CCI in the community. This was interpreted by some CCI representatives as being racially motivated. The program officer recognized that her actions were being interpreted through a color lens and that issues of race were undermining the foundation-CCI relationship, but she expressed frustration as to how to begin a dialogue about this.

In other cases, program officers report that they bend over backwards to avoid such a negative dynamic, sometimes to the point of withholding critical feedback. Under these conditions, respect is hard to maintain on both sides. While hiring program officers and staff who mirror racially/ethnically the CCI communities in which the foundation is invested may be important for a number of reasons, including historical ones, it is not a sufficient response to the many complex diversity issues embedded in foundation-CCI relationships. Many foundation staff are simply at a loss as to how to be sensitive to the issue of race and to translate concepts such as building on the cultural strengths of the community into operational realities in their CCIs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

CCIs represent an important development in philanthropic support for human and community development. They offer great promise—of individual engagement and development, community revitalization, and foundation contribution to the achievement of important social goals. But they present, equally, an array of challenges. These challenges arise principally from CCIs' great potential strengths—their attempt to engage the community and to secure long-term sustainable change. As this paper documents, these and other characteristics of CCIs create unique demands on all participants. These demands exist within a policy context that increasingly treats the community as not only the locus but also the generator of reform and development.

The following recommendations present some of what has been learned to date in the area that has been the focus of this paper, the role of philanthropy in CCIs and, in particular, the relationship between CCI funders and community participants. These recommendations come from our respondents directly and from our own observations and analyses. Some reflect consensus. Others suggest quite different or competing strategies for avoiding the pitfalls and maximizing the success of the foundation-CCI relationship. While most may sound quite straightforward, implementing them at more than a rhetorical level may require, in many cases, serious shifts in foundation thinking and practice.[8]

Communities and foundations both must consider seriously whether they want to participate in CCIs. This is not a decision to be made lightly. Both sides must be willing to examine themselves honestly and be willing to make fundamental changes in support of CCI goals and principles. Each potential partner needs to understand for itself and put on the table for the other its reasons for participating, making explicit self-interests that are usually left implicit. This discussion should also include clarity about the constraints under which each side is working and about what is negotiable and what is not.

CCIs need to be learning enterprises. They should be characterized by an honest exchange of information and views and a

8 John Gaventa (1997) notes that these recommendations mirror some of the current thinking about participatory development as an approach to solving issues of poverty internationally. Many international donors are now interested in an approach that enables local people to "undertake their own appraisal, analysis, action, monitoring and evaluation" (ACTIONAID India and SPEECH 1996, 70). While this presents many opportunities, the dangers can come from "demanding too much, in a top-down mode, too fast, with too little understanding of participatory development and its implications." A report from this workshop noted that practitioners and researchers in this field are increasingly recognizing that the behavior and attitudes of donors and development agencies will need to change if this approach to development is to succeed.

culture of learning from mistakes, not hiding them or punishing each other for them. The substantial investments required by CCIs on everyone's part make it imperative to generate lessons that can inform practice now and improve future partnerships. Indeed, additional knowledge about such issues as how to measure increased community capacity and what constitutes reasonable progress should help foundations and their CCI partners go a long way toward negotiating more effective relationships. If CCIs are to be learning enterprises, new strategies for building that learning into the organizational framework, for structuring the evaluation, and for supporting self-reflection and cross-site sharing need to be developed and tested.

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Foundations sponsoring CCIs need to make institutional commitments to them. These commitments should not be largely dependent on an individual program officer or a theme domain or program area (e.g., children's services, economic development, the arts, etc.) within the foundation. Grant commitments are made by foundations not by individuals. In practice, however, there is often one program officer or a small group of staff who champion the CCI through its development and garner support for its implementation. If the program officer leaves or if the foundation reorganizes and establishes new priorities, the long-term viability of the CCI may be threatened. CCIs are particularly vulnerable to such changes because of their extended time horizons. Even a CCI that continues to receive financial support is vulnerable to neglect, to a revised set of foundation expectations or reporting requirements, and to a whole new group of staff to whom to make the case for its continued existence. CCI participants cited several examples of initiatives being phased down or becoming marginal within the foundation once the original program officer had left the foundation.

A related issue is the communication and coordination among staff who work in different program areas in a foundation. CCI participants said that the lack of substantive and operational coordination among foundation staff frequently resulted in mixed signals from the foundation and thus in uncertainty at the community level about the roles and lines of authority within the foundation. This became particularly problematic when it involved foundation staff who worked with organizations in a CCI community but who did not work through the CCI. Foundation officers also acknowledged the need for improved communication among foundation staff and across foundation departments so that the foundation's actions and communications constitute a coherent whole in the community. One foundation officer noted that greater coordination within a foundation might reduce an initiative's dependence on a single program officer.

Foundations need to acknowledge and develop strategies to address the existence of other initiatives in "their" CCI communities. In addition to organizing themselves internally to support CCIs, foundations need to address the presence of multiple initiatives within one community and the lack of collaboration or coordination among sponsors. While there is no shortage of depleted communities in need of community revitalization efforts, some communities are the home of myriad community change initiatives sponsored by both public and private entities. For example, two communities we observed had at least three separate CCIs or CCI-like initiatives sponsored by three different foundations and these were layered onto city, state, and federal government initiatives. Such situations create two types of tensions or challenges. First, each funder typically encourages or even requires a representative and legitimate governing mechanism at the community level for its CCI. In the presence of multiple CCIs in one community, this requirement stretches often overcommitted community participants and strains or depletes the leadership in the community that is readily accessible or vis-

ible to outside sponsors. In addition, different initiatives often have different visions and often produce competing claims on existing resources.

Second, the existence of multiple initiatives operating in one community challenges foundation officers to consider how to coordinate or collaborate with other sponsoring foundations. If such coordination and collaboration are expected of them—and they are—CCI participants vigorously assert that it is fair to expect the same of sponsoring foundations. Yet, as both sides are quick to point out, such coordinated efforts among foundations are rare. As one program officer said, "If it happens, it's damn lucky." Foundations are reluctant to risk losing autonomy and focus through combined efforts and are even more reluctant to build upon existing CCIs sponsored by other foundations. Some CCIs do receive support from multiple foundations, which, whatever its benefits, can be extremely challenging for CCI staff if the foundations do not coordinate their budgets, reporting requirements, or expectations.[9] In sum, there are powerful forces working against foundation collaboration, but most foundation staff acknowledge the need to supplement their own CCI partnerships with some productive attention to other related activities in the targeted communities.

Foundations need to consider seriously the feasibility of creating productive relationships with communities and the main grantmaking strategies available for doing so. Two approaches to achieving these kinds of relationships are described below in a somewhat oversimplified fashion that emphasizes their differences for the sake of discussion. There are many variations on these approaches that can be tailored to the organizational styles of individual foundations and the preferences of individual communities. The first involves investment at the foundation in identifying the parameters of a contract to govern the arrangements between the foundation and a potential community partner. The second involves pre-initiative capacity-building investment by the foundation in one or more potential CCI communities.

The contract-specification approach views the genesis of the initiative as follows: a foundation determines what ideas and strategies it wants to test and then identifies a community entity that agrees to try to meet foundation specifications. This requires foundations to devote more time than has been the case with most CCIs to specifying the goals and desired outcomes of the CCI and to developing a theory of change about how these outcomes will be achieved. There is also need to invest more foundation time in developing clarity about expectations for implementing the initiative's key components, about the direction and pace of action, and about the ways in which accountability will be determined.

These contractual specifications cannot be unrealistically precise or rigid, given the evolving and participatory nature of CCIs. But foundations should not let CCIs' evolutionary qualities deter them from engaging in rigorous planning and in committing themselves to the outcomes they aim to achieve. Ignoring agreed-upon accountability standards or backing away from intended outcomes, without acknowledging and learning from these changes, can be demoralizing to everyone. The assumption behind this approach is that the CCI-foundation partnership will be strengthened, and dishonest relations and cynicism reduced, if foundations assume the responsibility that comes with the resources they hold and dispense and if they exert power in ways that are clear and straightforward.

An alternative approach to establishing the conditions for a productive relationship is for a foundation to spend some number of years, perhaps three to five, in a target community investing in community organizing and in organizational and leadership development strategies. This would serve as a precursor to a decision on whether to mount a CCI in that community. The aim of this process is to get to know and develop trusting relationships with different parts of the community, to be responsive to a wide

9 CCI staff often talk about trying to find a balance between dependence on one source, that can make them vulnerable to domination by that source, and dependence on many sources, that can threaten the initiative's core identity and purpose.

range of capacity-building needs, and to consider funding opportunities as they emerge. These relationships can be built slowly, step by step, generating learning and trust on both sides. The knowledge gained, the credibility earned, and the relationships developed through this process can form the basis of a strong partnership that is grounded in an organic process of development. Ideally, the CCI's specific goals, theories, and strategies will emerge from this organic process. Some of the best European donor agencies in development are sending staff into the field and asking them to spend two to three years getting to know the community and building relationships before proposing any program strategy (Gaventa 1997).

Foundations may wish to accelerate the development of knowledge about some key issues that seem so problematic for foundation-CCI relations. As the numbers and varieties of CCIs increase and the lifespans of CCIs lengthen, the experiential learning arising from participation in the CCI process and from studying CCI outcomes will help foundations revise and refine their investment strategies. It may be beneficial to know more sooner, however, in such key areas such as race and pace.

The issues associated with race in CCIs would benefit from a focused, cross-initiative review. Race relations in this country continue to challenge all of us. In a relationship between a powerful, usually white foundation and a low-income, usually minority community, race can exert a strong influence on the way the relationship develops and on what the relationship can produce. There seems to be little doubt that foundations need to treat race as a salient dimension of all aspects of CCI design and implementation. A cross-initiative review of how this has been done successfully could help all to identify promising strategies for decreasing the space between CCIs and their sponsors.

It would be useful to explore the issue of pace across the variety of existing CCIs. Can we draw any conclusions at this point about how long it takes, for example, to form a new community collaborative, to develop a vision and strategic plan for a neighborhood, or to start capturing benchmarks of progress in the development of community capacity? Early lessons would be very helpful in tackling the larger issue of accountability.

Both funders and other CCI participants might benefit from the services of a coach to help a CCI stay on track and to assist the funder and CCI participants in operating as part of the same team. A coach internalizes the vision and theory of change that are supposed to guide the CCI and, in doing so, embodies a bridge between foundation and CCI. The coach must be perceived as a trusted and knowledgeable observer whose primary interest is in the productive implementation of the initiative as driven by the vision. The coach works with all parties, including the funder, to help them operationalize this vision as they carry out their day-to-day tasks. By being accountable to the vision of the CCI, rather than to the funder, he or she has a unique vantage point from which to view the unfolding CCI and the freedom to see and speak independently. The coach should be close enough to all aspects of the action to understand its specific dynamics but far enough away to avoid being pulled in as an interested party.

The coach must be able to play a variety of roles including teacher, supporter, shuttle diplomat, astute broker, challenger, and *nudge*. This means that the coach must have a wide range of conceptual, interpersonal, problem-solving, and political talents. While program officers may successfully assume certain aspects of this coaching role, their potential effectiveness as coaches is necessarily limited by their primary role as funders. The CCI funder would need to provide the money to hire the coach, but it would be important that the coach be accountable primarily to the initiative, rather than to any one party. One model for operationalizing this accountability structure would be that the funder, the CCI staff director, a CCI board member, and perhaps the TA provider and the evaluator form a management team that hires and supervises the coach.

While several funders and technical assistance providers have discussed the notion of a coach, we have not yet seen it implemented in the pure form that is described here. In one of the case studies, however, the TA team did "coach" the sites to be more straightforward with the funder

and thus to use the funder's knowledge and resources to their advantage rather than to hold back because of suspicion and distrust. In this same initiative, the funder reported feeling comfortable giving the site candid feedback and "pushing" it because she knew that the site would "push back" if the foundation went beyond the site's values and priorities. Clearly, the metaphorical space in this funder-CCI relationship had been diminished with time and effort.

Finally, this paper has focused on what foundations can do to alter the nature of the space between CCIs and their foundation sponsors. Another potentially fruitful line of inquiry would **ask a parallel set of questions about what CCI participants can do to make the relationship with their sponsors more productive.**

These recommendations are put forth in the spirit of stimulating dialogue about the delicate and important relationship between foundations and the CCIs they sponsor, a discussion that could benefit from candid exchange among all the parties concerned. We are confident that such an exchange can lead to more productive relationships and can advance the design and implementation of CCIs in the future.

Appendix A: Methodology

Identifying the Sample

CCIs have alternatively been referred to as comprehensive community-building initiatives (Stone 1996), comprehensive neighborhood-based community empowerment initiatives (Eisen 1992), comprehensive, collaborative persistent poverty initiatives (Fishman and Phillips 1993; Rosewater 1992), or simply community-building initiatives (Jenny 1993). Definitions vary as much as this nomenclature. For the purposes of this paper, we considered an initiative to be a CCI if it included the following three fundamental program components:

- The initiative is geographically targeted, with a particular neighborhood or set of neighborhoods being the units of social change.
- The initiative works to be comprehensive—that is, to work in more than one, usually four to six, sectors.[10] For our purposes, "comprehensive" does not mean that the initiative has to have active programming in all sectors, but it does require the initiative to consider the relation of a broad range of sectors to the initiative's goals and objectives.
- Citizen participation and capacity building are central to the initiative, which means that existing capacities within the neighborhood are drawn on and additional capacity is developed to foster sustainable change. The focus of the capacity-building work may be at the individual, institutional, and collective levels.

Finally, because the focus of this paper is the relationship between foundations and CCIs, we included only those initiatives that are sponsored and supported either solely or significantly by a foundation or a collaboration among foundations.

Determining Data Collection Strategies

The complexities of the relationship between a CCI and its funder or funders make gathering reliable information from either party a difficult task. This reality was reinforced for us early on in the study, when we realized that we would not be able to create a candid interview situation or obtain data that were sufficiently complete and nuanced unless we agreed not to reference particular individuals or initiatives in the report. The values and concepts that characterize CCIs, such as "community empowerment," "foundation partnership," and "participatory planning," further complicate the already complex relations between grantor and grantee. These terms implicitly present important information about the nature of the relationship between the foundation and initiative participants, but these features of the relationship are seldom explicitly discussed. Conversations are often governed more by what seems politically correct or safe than

10 Sectors typically considered by CCIs are: social services, physical development and infrastructure, economic development, education, safety and security, and health services.

by a candid assessment of the relationship's strengths and weaknesses. Another obstacle to candid conversation is the likelihood that funder-CCI relationships will last many years, which adds to concerns about maintaining the relationship.

Our methodology draws from three sources of data that offer a broad range of perspectives, experiences, and knowledge. These sources are described below: (1) interviews with knowledgeable people; (2) case studies of illustrative community change initiatives; and (3) transcriptions of focus groups that were carried out for the study, *Voices from the Field*. The first source helped us frame the issues and questions, the second provided the opportunity for in-depth understanding of the issues from multiple participants' perspectives in a limited number of initiatives, and the third gave us additional breadth in the initiatives and individuals from whose experience we were able to draw. We found that once afforded confidentiality, both foundation and CCI participants welcomed the opportunity to discuss their perspectives on this topic. This was also the case for participants in the *Voices from the Field* study, who were similarly assured that the views they expressed would not be associated with themselves as individuals or with their initiatives. While we cannot relate the findings discussed in this paper to specific initiatives and their funders, we nevertheless believe that the data from the three sources that we have drawn on, along with our own experiences documenting and evaluating CCIs, accurately describe a wide range of foundation involvement in CCIs and the issues commonly generated by this involvement.

Our first source of data is seven interviews with knowledgeable people in the field. These individuals were either known to us to be articulate and reflective about CCIs and philanthropy, or were recommended to us by others. As discussed above, these interviews were held in confidence. They covered a range of aspects of the foundation-CCI relationship and were particularly helpful to us as we framed our questions for the case-study interviews.

Our second source of data is six CCIs that we studied intensively. Although no six initiatives can be fully representative of the universe of community change initiatives qualifying as CCIs under our definition, we selected initiatives that illustrate a broad range of approaches taken by foundations in sponsoring and supporting CCIs. One of the dimensions along which we sought variation in the six initiatives included the number of sites and the type and number of funders involved. The final group included: two local-foundation/single-site initiatives; a local-foundation/multi-site initiative; a national-foundation/multi-site initiative; a multiple-foundation/single-site initiative; and a multiple-foundation/multi-site initiative. We also looked for initiatives that had evolved past the start-up phase: with one exception, all the initiatives had existed at least two years and two had existed for more than four years. In addition, we selected initiatives that demonstrated variations in the roles played by the sponsoring foundations, the initial programmatic focus, the structure of technical assistance in the initiative, and the role and structure of the evaluation.

For each of the six case-study initiatives, we reviewed relevant materials and documents such as foundation descriptions of the initiative, any available evaluations or program reports, and materials generated by the CCI itself. We also conducted semi-structured interviews with representatives from the foundation and the CCI, as well as with intermediary organizations, technical assistance providers, and evaluators, as appropriate. As with the interviews with knowledgeable individuals, we agreed not to identify in this paper either the six initiatives or the individuals interviewed. The interviews followed a semi-structured format, with Appendix B serving as the guide.

Our final source of data is the transcriptions from focus groups conducted for the *Voices from the Field* study. Sponsored by the Aspen Institute's Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families, this study convened eleven, day-long focus groups that brought together a total of ninety-four individuals to share their observations about CCIs and to assist the Roundtable produce an analytic portrait of CCIs that could be of use to a number of audiences. The participants were organized by peer groups in the CCI field: foundation representatives, initiative directors and staff, evaluators, members of the

governance structures of local initiatives, residents of neighborhoods in which CCIs are taking place, and other experts and observers in the field. After receiving approval from the authors of the *Voices from the Field* study, we reviewed the transcriptions from these focus groups. We looked with particular interest at the material on the relations between funders and CCIs, which arose in all of the peer group sessions. This source of data enabled us to complement the seven individual interviews and the six case studies with the perspectives from a broad group of individuals and experience gained from an additional ten to twelve initiatives.

Appendix B: Protocol for Semi-Structured Interviews[11]

I. Origins and Intent of the Initiative

1. What was the foundation's involvement in the origin of the initiative—in terms of both the conceptual (e.g., motivating principles) and the operational (e.g., site selection)?

2. At what point in the development of the initiative was community input sought? Who from the community was initially approached?

3. How would you define the goals and strategies of the initiative? (I.e., what are the fundamental changes being sought and in what ways does the initiative intend to bring them about?)

4. How important is community control (e.g., empowerment) and community participation to this process of fundamental change? How do you understand/define community control?

II. Staffing

5. How has the foundation staffed the initiative? Why did it choose this approach?

6. What is the background of the foundation staff working on the initiative? Has staff turnover at the foundation been an issue for the initiative?

7. What skills do you think are important for the foundation's staff to have to support the initiative? Do these skills differ from those usually required of foundation's staff?

8. Did the foundation's staff receive any additional training or support in preparation for this work?

III. Communication

9. How has the communication between the communities and the foundation been structured?

10. What other formal and informal mechanisms does the foundation utilize to gather information regarding the progress of the initiative?

11. How well do you think the communities understand the context of the foundation and the constraints under which it operates?

12. How well do you think the foundation understands the context of the community and the constraints under which it operates?

13. What issues or areas have been the sources of the greatest or the most continuous misunderstandings between the communities and foundation?

IV. Decision-making

14. Within the foundation, what are the lines of decision-making, accountability, and authority regarding the initiative?

15. How active is the board with the initiative? Has the board received any additional training related to the initiative?

16. How has the foundation modified its grantmaking process in support of this initiative (e.g., long-term funding)?

a. How does this process differ from standard operating procedures?

b. What are the major benefits and challenges to this approach?

V. Technical Assistance

17. What forms of technical assistance are provided through the initiative?

18. Who decided on these forms of

11 These questions are formatted for foundation respondents. They were modified for each of our groups of respondents (e.g., CCI participants, technical assistance providers, evaluators, and observers).

technical assistance and why?

19. Is there technical assistance available to support the foundation?

20. Are there other forms of technical assistance that you think would be helpful?

VI. Evaluation

21. How has the evaluation been structured for this initiative?

22. Who decided on this type of evaluation and why?

23. Are there other types of evaluation that you think would be helpful?

24. How are lessons from this initiative being shared with those not directly involved in the initiative (e.g., the larger funding community)?

VII. Race

25. How do you see race impacting the development of this initiative and, in particular, the relationship between the foundation and the CCI community?

26. Have you sought to address these issues related to race? How?

VIII. Long-Term Viability and General Lessons

27. Given the nature of this initiative and the long-term goals it seeks, how are you thinking about its long-term viability?

28. What other efforts outside of directly supporting the communities do you think are important for the foundation to make? Has the foundation approached other funding sources (both public and private) to support the initiative?

29. If you could alter the structure and the relationship between the foundation and the CCI community, would you do anything differently?

30. Are there any other issues or lessons that we have not touched on that are important for understanding the relationship between the foundation and the CCI community in this initiative?

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